Estimating and Appraising a Diasporic Population for Diaspora Engagement: Methodological Options in the Case of Ghanaians in Canada

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Abstract:

Theorizations and measurements of diasporic populations and their engagements with people at both ends of the migration cycle have never been more important in migration studies. Yet the concepts of diaspora and diaspora engagement remain illusive in any attempt to pin them down. However, whatever their disputed definitions and etymologies, the study of diaspora and diaspora engagement is steadily nearing maturity or, at least, gaining considerable traction in the social sciences. The present paper contributes to the burgeoning literature in this area of research by offering specific methodological options for estimating the size and characteristics of an African diasporic population, using the case of Ghanaians in the Greater Toronto Area as a case study. More specifically, the paper offers four approaches which are dubbed add-up, complete census, a major survey, and the analysis of customized data, for ease of presentation, together with their respective strengths and weaknesses.

Résumé:

Les théorisations, la quantification des populations de la diaspora et leurs engagements avec les populations qui se trouvent aux deux extrémités du cycle de migration n'ont jamais été aussi importantes dans les études sur la migration. Pourtant, les concepts d’engagement de la diaspora et de diaspora restent illuslores dans toute tentative d’identification. Cependant, quelles que soient leurs définitions et leurs étymologies souvent contestées, l'étude de l'engagement de la diaspora et de diaspora tiennent de plus en plus l'attention ou du moins, gagne en popularité en sciences sociales. Le présent article contribue à l’éclosion de la littérature dans ce domaine de recherche et présente des options méthodologiques spécifiques qui permettent d’estimer la taille et les caractéristiques d'une population de la diaspora africaine. Elles s'appuient sur le cas des Ghanéens de la région du Grand Toronto. Plus précisément et afin d’estimer la taille, les caractéristiques d’une population de la diaspora africaine, l’article propose quatre approches, à savoir l’addition, le recensement complet, une large enquête et l’analyse des données personnalisées pour en faciliter la présentation, ainsi que leurs forces et leurs failles respectives.

Keywords / Mots clés

Migration, theorization, diaspora, estimation, appraising a diasporic population, diaspora engagement
Migration, théorisation, diaspora, évaluation, mesure, population, engagement

INTRODUCTION

As international migration continues to increase across the world, issues of diaspora engagement loom large in academic and policy circles. Of course, diaspora engagement is not new. Long before the recent proliferation of diaspora studies, migrants have been working with both public and private entities in pursuit of development goals in their homelands. Nonetheless, until quite recently, the extant literature on international migration was brimming with concerns about the harmful effects of migration on countries of origin, especially in Africa, where claims of “brain drain” have been almost canonical, with analysts blaming emigration for dwindling productivity, in particular, and sometimes underdevelopment, in general. Now we know better: (e) migration is neither essentially good nor essentially bad, it all depends on the context. Thus, it is not uncommon now to see migrants, in positive light, as a source of brain gain or brain circulation, remittance, philanthropy, investments, as well as impetus for tourism in Africa. Through such programs as the International Organization of Migration’s (IOM) Migration for African’s Development (MIDA); United Nations Development Project’s (UNDP) Transfer of Knowledge through Expatriate Nationals; and the Carnegie Corporation’s Next Generation of Academics in Africa Project, brain circulation is now widespread across Africa (Agunias and Newland 2012; IOM 2004; Quartey 2006; Ratha and Mohapatra 2011). Concurrently, the importance of remittance to Africa’s development is now beyond dispute (Adam 2006; Tona and Setrana 2017; United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs [UNDESA] 2016; World Bank 2016). Estimates by UNDESA (2015), for instance, indicate that in 2014 there was some US$63.8 billion worth of remittance to Africa.
Africa, with countries of North Africa taking the lead with nearly half of this amount (i.e., $31.3 billion), followed by those in West Africa with $25.9 billion, East Africa ($4.5 billion), and Southern African ($1.5 billion) in that order. In the specific case of Ghana, remittance flow has averaged around $2 billion per annum since 2010 and, thus, exceeding foreign direct investment (FDI) and Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) to the country (Government of Ghana 2016, p.69).

Without a doubt, African diasporic communities play an important role in the socioeconomic and cultural development of their respective homelands. The pressing question then becomes: how best can policy makers in Africa harness diasporic resources for the benefit of national development? Is it in this context that diaspora engagement has gained so much traction among policy makers, academics, immigrant communities, and other stakeholders in and outside the continent. At the same time, many African countries, including Ghana, are struggling with their diaspora engagement initiatives, due to the perennial problem of inadequate funding, and the attendant lack of basic data on their diasporic populations in major immigrant receiving centers of the world.

The dearth of basic socioeconomic data on Ghanaians living overseas—which is the focus of the present study—has long been acknowledged in the available literature (Government of Ghana 2016; Quartey 2009; Twum Baah 2005). Indeed, the size of the Ghanaian emigrant population in leading European and North American countries, including United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Germany, United States, and Canada remains a mystery, just as the number of Ghanaians in major African destinations (e.g., Nigeria, Cote d’Ivoire, Togo, Libya, Gabon, and South Africa) continues to be enigmatic. What we have are wide-ranging ‘guestimates’ gleaned from various publications and websites of varying degrees of reliability. Writing in the “Executive Summary” to an IOM-sponsored Country Profile of Migration in Ghana, Quartey (2009, p. 13) have this to say, with insights from various expressed sources:

According to 2008 Ministry of Foreign Affairs estimates, Ghanaian migrants can be found in more than 33 countries around the world...Estimates of the Ghanaian emigrant population range from 1.5 million (Twum Baah, 2005) to 3 million (Black et al., 2003).

Even though the idea that, by 2008, Ghanaians were living in more than 33 countries around the world is quite reasonable, there is no denying that this estimate is rather too broad. Also, for one scholar to estimate the Ghanaian emigrant population to be as much as 3 million in 2003, and another to have it as 1.5 million just two years afterwards is problematic, to put it mildly. It is hard to account for such a dramatic decline, at least based on what we know about the migration profile of Ghana since the year 2000. Nonetheless, with no realistic way of knowing the size of the Ghanaian emigrant population, we can hardly blame these trailblazing scholars, or the subsequent ones who quote them, for their guestimates. The need for basic data on Ghanaian emigrants for national development planning, in general, and for specific initiatives such as efforts to get Ghanaian emigrants to participate in national elections is quite evident. In responding to the expressed interest of Ghanaian diasporans to partake in national elections, the Government of Ghana passed its Representation of the People’s Amendment Law (ROPAL) (ACT 699) in 2006, with plans to implement it by the upcoming national election in 2020. While a similar program is already in place in a number of African countries such as Algeria, Gabon, Guinea, Mozambique, and Namibia, the Ghana government is yet to register, let alone collect any substantive data on, Ghanaian emigrants to make the ROPAL program practicable.

OBJECTIVE

The present paper offers practical methodological suggestions to address a specific aspect of the preceding data gap, to wit: explore ways of gathering reliable data on the size and socioeconomic characteristics of Ghanaians in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). The paper emanates from a request from a number of entities—including the leadership of the Ghana-Canadian Association of Ontario (GCAO), the Ghana High Commission in Ottawa, the Ghana Consulate in Toronto, and other Ghanaian immigrant groups and individuals in Toronto—to offer guidance on how to gather basic data on Ghanaians in the GTA. We must note that while the Canadian census is generally reliable, it is often found wanting when it comes to ascertaining the number of Africans, and for that matter Ghanaians, in Canada, due the enormous diversity of ethnicities among Africans. Ghana, for one has more than 50 ethnic groups, and it is virtually impossible to capture all of them in the Canadian census. We thus find the 2016 census, for instance, counting Ghanaians under the following four ethnic origins: Ghanaian, Akan, Ashanti, and Ewe, with the rest being lumped into the generic and quite amorphous categories of Black and Other Africans. Given the high likelihood of some, if not many, Ghanaians being counted under the categories of Black and Other Africans, the common contention among Ghanaians that the Canadian census tends to underestimate the size of the Ghanaian diaspora is warranted. Moreover, as any one with reasonable familiarity with Ghanaian culture would know, a person who is an Ashanti is also an Akan; and, of course, that same person could also come under the categories of Ghanaian, Black, or Other African, if need be, thereby breaching the principle of mutual exclusivity in such categorization.

Undoubtedly, the findings of this study could serve the Ghanaian diaspora in Toronto, in particular, and the Government of Ghana’s diaspora engagement initiative, in general, in many different ways. At the macro- or national-level, the study could serve as a guide for the registration of Ghanaians in pursuance of the incipient ROPAL initiative. It could also guide attempts to procure data on the skillset of Ghanaians in the GTA for national development. Moreover, the Ghana High Commission in Ottawa could rely on this study for similar data procurement exercise in different cities across Canada and even beyond-obviously, with the necessary contextual adjustments. At the meso-, community-, or collective-level in the GTA, the findings could be used to collect data on Ghanaians for the planning of programs for community and social support, advocacy, and Ghanaian-Canadian heritage celebrations. At the micro-level, data from the study will be useful for business promotion and advertisement in the GTA. Finally, in terms of scholarship in the academy, this work stands to advance our insights into issues of international migration, transnationalism, and diaspora engagement as studies in such fields as geography, sociology, and diaspora studies. While the paper is methodological at its core, we, in the next section, provide some theoretical grounding on such concepts as diaspora and diaspora engagement to help contextualize the discussion properly.

THEORIZING DIASPORA AND DIASPORA ENGAGEMENT

Etymologically speaking, “diaspora” derives from the conjoint Greek term diasperien—which comes from dia-, “across” and –sepien, “to sow or scatter seeds.” Thus, diaspora literally connotes a scattered population whose origin lies in a separate geographic area. The term was originally used to describe Jews living in exile from their homeland of Palestine (Braziel and Mannur 2003, 1). In medieval rabbinical writings, “diaspora” was commonly used to...
describe plight of Jews living outside Palestine. “Diaspora,” as Paul Gilroy reminds us, is an ancient word with some religious undertones. To the extent that words such as “exile,” “dislocation,” and “nostalgia” are commonly used to describe diasporas, it is not hard to see that such migrations are often involuntary, entailing substantial coercion and angst. At the same time, we must note that not all connotations of “diaspora” are negative or entail coercion. At the very least, one can infer from its etymology that “diaspora” can also have some positive connotations, pointing to the fertility of dispersion or of scattering seeds wide afield (Braziel and Mannur 2003, 1). Still, like the Jewish diaspora, the African diaspora is historically underpinned by experiences of extreme coercion and hardship associated with the slave trade of yore. Beginning in the 16th Century, Black Africans were forcibly relocated mainly from West Africa and dispersed across the “New World.” Even though no one knows for sure how many Africans were shipped to the Americas, generally accepted estimates range from ten to fifteen million (Mensah 2002; Rodney 1977). This transatlantic shipment of Black African slaves yielded a number of fractured diasporas in the late 19th century through the 20th century, as many of these Black Africans relocated from south to north in North America, as well as across the Western Hemisphere (Braziel and Mannur 2003).

The late University of Birmingham cultural theorist Stuart Hall was right in observing that “diaspora,” a term traditionally used to describe Jews in exile is now used to cover a wide range of territorial displacements, either forced or voluntary (1997, p.144). Similarly, Braziel and Mannur (2003) note that “Once conceptualized as an exilic or nostalgic dislocation from homeland, diaspora has attained new epistemological, political, and identitarian resonances as its points of reference proliferate” (p.4). Indeed, the term is now used as a catch-all phrase to describe nearly all forms of migration, whether they are voluntary or involuntary; enacted by the privileged or by the truly disadvantaged; among skilled or unskilled workers; for family unification or asylum-seeking.

Although the original usage of “diaspora” places some emphasis on memory, nostalgia, politics, and culture, all of which bind those in exile to a specific original homeland, more recent formulations have embraced what Stuart Hall calls the “lateral axes” (1997, p. 144), which binds diasporic communities across different national boundaries to each other and not necessary or not only to a particular homeland. We see a clear depiction of this in Paul Gilroy’s Black Atlantic (1993), where he evinces how the experiences of people of African heritage in different places in the Caribbean, North America, and Europe are connected to each other by way of their shared histories of crossing, migration, and racist exploitation to yield hybridized cultures. Thus, while, Africa remains the ancestral homeland for people in the Black Atlantic, many among them are also connected, not necessary or not only to Africa, but also to an imagined community—a-la-Benedict Anderson; or Black Atlantic, per Paul Gilroy’s theorization.

Once we see the formation of hybridized cultures among diaspora, through such metaphors as Black Atlantic or imagined communities, we have no choice but to move away from a discourse of essentialism, which tends to homogenize the different people of the African diaspora into a form of “ethnic absolutism.” As Braziel and Mannur (2003, 5) remind us “Diasporic subjects are marked by hybridity and heterogeneity—cultural, linguistic, ethnic, national—and these subjects are defined by a traversal of the boundaries demarcating nation and diaspora.” It is in a similar vein that Stuart Hall (2003) sees the diaspora experience “not by essence or purity, but by the recognition of a necessary heterogeneity and diversity; by a conception of ‘identity’ which lives with and through, not despite, difference; by hybridity (p. 244; emphasis in original). The idea that the diasporic identity is a hybridized one in which people live in a liminal, third-space (Bhabha 1994) has gained traction over the years, thanks to the likes of Stuart Hall (2003), Paul Gilroy (1993), Jan Nederveen Pieterse (1995) and Kobena Mercer (2003). The latter, for one, talks of diaspora in terms of a critical dialogism that subverts the monologic exclusivity upon which some discourses on national identity have been couched. With the primacy given to cultural hybridity, life in liminal spaces, and the social construction of identity in the available literature, it is unsurprising that theorizations of diasporic identity now encompassed imagined, unstable, and de-territorialized—as against, concrete, stable, territorialized, and essentialized—noths of citizenship.

For the purpose of this study, we use diaspora to connote a spatially dispersed network of ethnically and culturally related peoples who espouse a distinct identification with a particular homeland to which they maintain some affective and material ties (Baker 2003; 225; Brah 1996, 182; Handbook, p15). Implicit in this definition are notions of travel, journey, migration, homeland, nostalgia, memory, and borders, which, in turn, draw our attention to those who travel “where, when, how and under what circumstance” (Brah 1996, 182). Following Chris Baker (2003, p. 256), we see diaspora as a relational concept to the extent that it evokes “configurations of power that differentiate between diasporas internally,” and between diasporans and citizens in the homeland. In this power dynamics, the diasporan is often seen as inauthentic, illegitimate, or “the bastard child of the nation”; (Braziel and Mannur 2003, p.19) compared to people at home who are deemed more authentic. However, we see no legitimate reason to have diasporans stand in a hierarchically subordinate relation to people in the homeland. Arguably, it is this assumption of basic parity that underpins the call for ROPEL and other initiatives to get Ghanaians in the diaspora to be involved in the life of the homeland, as much as possible. After all, if their remittances and other contributions to national development are duly accepted by people in the homeland, so should their full recognition in the national polity. Relatedly, we see “diaspora engagement” as a process—and not a stable entity, program, or policy, per se—by which the State, working with various governmental and non-governmental institutions, groups, and individuals, seeks to mobilize the goodwill and resources of its emigrants for national development, and implicitly for the mutual benefit of citizens in the homeland and in the diaspora. Diaspora engagement is not a one-way process; at the basic level, it entails engagements between the government, civil society organizations, groups, and individuals in the homeland, on the other hand, and individuals and groups of the diasporic community, on the other hand. There are cases in which government and civil society organizations in the destination may also be involved in these engagements.

Notable examples of diaspora engagements emanating from the government of Ghana over the years include the formal acknowledgement, in the Ghana National Immigration Policy, of the important role played by the diaspora in national development, as well as the passing of both the Dual Citizenship Act of 2002 and the ROPAL Act of 2006. Other examples include the establishment of Diaspora Affairs Bureau within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and National Integration and the creation of a Diaspora Desk in many Ghana Consulate offices overseas, with the objective of working with Ghanaian emigrants to facilitate matters of mutual interest. As Teye, Alhassan, and Setrema (2017) note, the Emancipation Day celebrations held annually in Ghana since 1998 and the cognate and
more recent Pan African Festival (PANAFEST) are part of the government of Ghana’s effort to promote diaspora engagement. Another such initiative is the Joseph Project, which was instituted in 2007 on the occasion of the 50th Independent anniversary celebration of Ghana, to mobilize people of Ghanaian and African decent for national development. Named after the biblical Joseph, who was sold into captivity by his brothers, this Project encourages the return visit of African diasporans to Ghana for tourism, investment and re-settlement. The Joseph Project is also used to promote Ghanaian cultural performances and various educational programs (Teye, Alhassan, and Setrena 2017). The recent drafting of a national Diaspora Engagement Policy is also part of the government’s diaspora engagement effort, writ large. Furthermore, with the conviction that return migration is invariably part of diaspora engagement, the government has been putting in place various support systems and programs for the successful re-integration of returnees.

As we noted earlier, Ghanaians in the diasporas have been contributing to national development and household consumption back home for decades through remittance and other transnational activities. In the specific case of the diasporic community in Toronto, other important initiatives in this regard include the recent formation of the Ghanaian Canadian Diasporan Engagement Think Tank and the Ghanaian Diaspora Registry by the Ghana-Canadian Association of Ontario (GCAO), working in concert with its subsidiary, the Ghanaian-Canadian Chamber of Commerce in Toronto. With the Think Tank, the GCAO hopes to foster critical analysis of policies and issues of interest to the Ghanaian diaspora in Canada and advocate on behalf of the Ghanaian community in Canada as it endeavours to meet the growing needs of Ghanaians in Canada. In a similar vein, the GCAO is using its incipient Ghanaian Diaspora Registry to collect basic data on the Ghanaian diaspora in Toronto; indeed the present paper is part of this GCAO initiative. With the decline in scholarly capacity in many African universities has come the need to mobilize diaspora intellectuals and professionals to strengthen research, teaching, and knowledge mobilization across Africa (Tettey 2016).

THE GHANAIAN DIASPORA IN TORONTO: DELINEATING ITS MEMBERSHIP

Clearly, any attempt to gather reliable data on the Ghanaian diaspora in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) has to start with some basic determination of who counts as a member of this community. This issue seems simple, even if not simplistic, prima facie. However, upon a closer examination, it leads to complex, serpentine pathways, making it difficult to answer with any appreciable degree of precision. Much of the difficulty is due to the internal heterogeneity of the population and the power dynamics embedded in it. Moreover, until as recently as 2002, Ghana did not have a dual citizenship provision in its Constitution, and many Ghanaians were compelled, by the exigencies of their immigration and settlement in Canada, to abdicate their Ghanaian citizenship in pursuit of a Canadian one. Indeed, many Ghanaian immigrants in Canada have not yet procured their dual citizenship and, thus, still hold only a Canadian citizenship and passport; such Ghanaians are invariably required to procure Ghanaian visa anytime they travel to Ghana. Do we count such Ghanaians among the bona fide Ghanaian diaspora in Canada? What about members of the second- or third-generation Ghanaian immigrant population who have neither been to Ghana before, nor speak any of the Ghanaian languages, even though both parents are of Ghanaian ethnicity or ancestry? What if only one of their parents is a Ghanaian? And, what happens if this second- or third-generation individual does not identify as a Ghanaian; do we still consider him or her as a Ghanaian? What about someone who is not a Ghanaian, say a Jamaican, but is married to a Ghanaian immigrant, and chooses to identify as a Ghanaian given his or her acquired competency in Ghanaian culture, in terms of language, religion, and culinary practices. The preceding questions put us in an intractable definitional conundrum. Admittedly, it is almost impossible to come up with a definition that is beyond dispute, given the internal heterogeneity and contradictions of the concepts of citizenship, nationality, race, and ethnicity, upon which any definition of a diasporic community depends. We here propose an operational definition of membership that entails four categories of people designated as: (i) Proto-Ghanaians; (ii) Ghanaians-cum-Canadians; (iii) “Ghanadians;” and (iv) Others (Table 1).

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Designation</th>
<th>Examples</th>
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<tr>
<td>Group 1</td>
<td>“Proto-Ghanaians”</td>
<td>Hold only Ghanaian citizenship. Mostly first-generation immigrants. They include refugees, Ghanaian foreign students, independent and family unification immigrants.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group 2</td>
<td>“Ghanaians-cum-Canadians”</td>
<td>Hold both Ghanaian and Canadian citizenships. Mostly first generation, but with some few second- and third-generation immigrants. They are often culturally hybridized enough to blend into both Ghanaian and Canadian cultures.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group 3</td>
<td>“Ghanaians”</td>
<td>Hold Canadian citizenship, but they are grounded in Ghanaian culture. They may be first- second- or third-generation immigrants. Normally, both of their parents are Ghanaians. They are usually like those in the first two groups, except they do not have official Ghanaian citizenship.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Group 4</td>
<td>“Others”</td>
<td>They do not fit into any of the other groups. Most of them have mixed ethnicity and citizenship, with some tie to Ghana or Africa. Most are second- or third-generation immigrants, with at least one Ghanaian parent. They include people of the Black Atlantic who have affinity to Ghana, and identify as Ghanaians.</td>
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Table 1: Membership of the Ghana Diaspora in Toronto

By this typology, “Proto-Ghanaians” are generally first generation Ghanian immigrants who hold only Ghanaian citizenship and passport. The prefix proto signifies that the bulk of the first-generation Ghanaian immigrants in Canada usually arrive under this particular category (as refugees, undocumented immigrants, visa students, or permanent residents per the independent class or family unification) before moving on, over time, to become Canadian citizens. The category of “Ghanaians-cum-Canadians” includes those who hold both Ghanaian and Canadian citizenships. Members of this group may be first- second- or even subsequent generation immigrants; what distinguishes them from members of the other groups is the fact that they hold dual Ghanaian and Canadian citizenship. Since Ghanaians in Canada are often called Ghanaian-Canadians, we intentionally use the term “Ghanaians-cum-Canadians” to set this sub-group apart from the generic label of “Ghanaian-Canadians.” The third group, designated with the neologism “Ghanadians,” is made up of people with Ghanaian cultural heritage at their core, but hold only Canadian citizenship, while living in Canada. Thus, unlike members of the first two groups, the “Ghanadians” have no choice but to apply for Ghanaian visa when they travel to Ghana. The last, but decidedly not the least, group is made up of “Others” who do not fit neatly into any of the preceding three categories. Members of this group are mostly people with mixed ethnicity, citizenship, parentsage, and heritage with some tie to Ghana, in particular, or Africa, in general. Many in this category may be second- or third-generation.

immigrants with one or no Ghanaian parent. This category includes people of black African ancestry from North America, Europe, the Caribbean, and Latin America (or what Paul Gilroy calls the Black Atlantic), who have special attachment to Ghana and self-identify as Ghanaians. Some members of this group may not be Ghanaian by birth or parentage, but may be married to a Ghanaian and self-identify as such. In terms of official citizenship, many in this last group may be citizens of Canada or any other country; the distinguishing feature of members of this group is their mixed ethnicity. We must stress that we use the term “Other” only for the lack of a better term and not in the common usage by which some people’s identity are downgraded by way of ethno-racial “othering.” As the careful reader might have noticed by now, even though our typology is based on one’s culture and citizenship, the primacy is generally accorded the latter for the sake of consistency and empirical data collection. After all, while people’s cultural attributes are inherently subjective, their official citizenship is readily amenable to objective counting.

The Ghanaian Immigration to Canada

Even though Ghanaian immigration to Canada began in the late 1950s, Ghanaians started coming to Canada in noticeable numbers during the 1970s, following the introduction of the “point system” of immigration in the 1960s. Deteriorating economic and political conditions in Ghana during the 1970s, and the relatively favourable immigration policies in Canada then, prompted the first major wave of Ghanaian immigration to Canada (Mensah, 2010). Having achieved a strong economic growth in the immediate post-independence era, Ghana experienced a serious economic downturn that culminated in a period of political instability in the 1970s, prompting many Ghanaians to emigrate to other African countries, Europe, and North America (Konadu-Agyemang, 1999). In fact, some Ghanaians who went to African and European countries eventually came to Canada by way of stepwise migration (Firang 2011).

The work of Mensah (2010) shows that during the 1960s, Ghanaian migration to Canada involved less than 100 people per year. Most of these pioneers were scholarship students, professionals in the education, health, and social service sectors, and a few political dissidents escaping both persecution and prosecution. The number of Ghanaians in Canada began to increase to several hundred people, per year, during the 1970s. The 1976 Immigration Act, which incorporated the U.N. Convention definition of a “refugee” into Canadian law, enabled more Ghanaian political dissidents to flee to Canada (Mensah, 2002). Landing data from Citizenship and Immigration Canada (2005) indicate that the number of Ghanaian immigrants landing in Canada from 1980 to 1990 averaged some 345 per year, and ranged from a low of 165 in 1980 to a high of 956 in 1987. It was during the 1990s that Ghanaian arrivals got to the thousands, peaking in 1992 with 2,464, before declining a bit in subsequent years. The Ghanaian diasporic population is overwhelming urban, with most of them living in Canada’s leading census metropolitan areas (CMAs), such as Toronto, Montreal, Vancouver, Edmonton, Calgary Ottawa-Gatineau and Hamilton (Statistics Canada 2016). Like most English-speaking African immigrants in Canada, Ghanaian are heavily concentrated in Ontario, where some 27,200 or 68% of the 39,885 of the Ghanaians in Canada now call home (Table 2). As can be seen from Table 2, the number of Ghanaians in the Toronto CMA stood at 10,025 in 1996 and increased by 46.8% to 14,720 by 2006 and again by 52.1% to 22,395 by the 2016 census. Notwithstanding these increases, Ghanaians still constitute only 0.37% of the total population of the Toronto CMA, and a mere 0.11% of the Canadian population by the latest national census of 2016 (Table 2).

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<tr>
<td>Toronto CMA</td>
<td>4,312,905</td>
<td>10.02% (0.27%)</td>
<td>5,072,070</td>
<td>14.720</td>
<td>5,928,040</td>
<td>22.395</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ontario</td>
<td>10,642,790</td>
<td>11.13% (0.29%)</td>
<td>12,028,895</td>
<td>17.470</td>
<td>13,448,495</td>
<td>27.200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>28,528,115</td>
<td>14.93% (0.57%)</td>
<td>31,281,825</td>
<td>22.290</td>
<td>35,151,062</td>
<td>29.885</td>
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Table 2: Persons of Ghanaian Ethnic Origin by the Toronto CMA, Ontario, and Canada


Note:
1. The percentage figure is the percentage share of the Ghanaians among the total population of the designated area.
2. The “Ghanaian” population is a combination of those who declare their ethnic origin as Akan (1960), Ashanti (1958), Ewe (845), and Ghanaian (35,495) in the 2016 Canadian census.

Table 3 profiles the socio-demographic and immigration background of the Ghanaians in the Toronto CMA (or the GTA), in particular, and Canada, in general. Perhaps, the most striking feature of the Table concerns the smallness of the marriage rate of Ghanaians in Toronto and Canada, compared to their “All Torontonians” and “All Canadians” counterparts. In the case of Toronto, the marriage rate of Ghanaians stood at 28.8%, compared to 50.3% among “All Torontonians”. For Canada as a whole, the marriage rate for Ghanaians is 34.3% compared to 46.2% for “All Canadians.” Clearly, many Ghanaian marriages are on the proverbial rocks one way or another, and any keen observer of the Ghanaian community in Toronto must have noticed this state of affair for some time now. Another remarkable feature of the Ghanaian diasporic population deals with its youthfulness: Whereas the 15–34 year cohort forms 32.0% of the Ghanaians in Toronto, the comparable data for “All Torontonians” is 27.3%. Similarly, some 31.2% of Ghanaians in Canada are within the ages of 15–34 years, as against 25.2% of “All Canadians” who fall in this cohort. The fact that the Ghanaian diasporic population is relatively recent, just like many African immigrants, could be adduced from the fact that only some 1.4% of the Ghanaians in Toronto are of the third generation, compared to 22.4% among “All Torontonians.” Similarly, whereas only 2.1% of Ghanaians across Canada belong to the third generation, the comparable figure for “All Canadian” is a warping 58.4%. When it comes to formal citizenship, a larger proportion of Ghanaians in Toronto (86.7%) hold Canadian citizenship than what obtains among “All Torontonian” (79.8%). However, the reverse is the true when it comes to Ghanaian across Canada (82.2%), compared to “All Canadians” (88.8%).

Table 4 provides data on the education, labour market and income characteristics of Ghanaians compared to the rest of the people in Toronto and across Canada. There is no readily discernible difference between the educational background of Ghanaians compared their “All Torontonian” and “All Canadian” counterparts. However, a closer look at Table 4 reveals that the number of Ghanaians with Master’s and Doctorate degrees is smaller than the comparable figures among “All Torontonians;” but the reverse is the case when it comes to Ghanaians versus “All Canadians.” (Table 4). Even though the educational background of Ghanaians is not discernibly different from those of “all Torontonians” and “All Canadians;” the median income of Ghanaians is lower, just as their unemployment rates are higher across the board.
The spatial distribution pattern of immigrants points to the extent of their integration in the host society. Using data from the 2006 census of Canada, Firang (2011) was able to map the spatial pattern of Ghanaians across the GTA, and from this map (Figure 1) it is quite clear that Ghanaians tend to reside in segregated pockets dispersed throughout GTA, with major concentrations in the north western part of the older suburbs of the City of Toronto, including the North York area of Jane-Finch and the Etobicoke neighborhoods of Jamestown and Rexdale. There is also a substantial spatial concentration of Ghanaians in central Brampton (Firang, 2011).

**Table 3: Socio-demographic and Immigration Background of Ghanaians in Toronto and Canada by 2016**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Ghanaian (%)</th>
<th>All Torontonians (%)</th>
<th>Ghanaian (%)</th>
<th>All Canadians (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Marital Status</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single</td>
<td>N = 25,085</td>
<td>N = 45,040,095</td>
<td>N = 25,085</td>
<td>N = 45,040,095</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>28.8</td>
<td>50.3</td>
<td>34.1</td>
<td>66.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living Common law</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>12.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not married/not com. Law</td>
<td>66.5</td>
<td>43.8</td>
<td>50.6</td>
<td>41.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citizenship</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada only</td>
<td>N = 20,465</td>
<td>N = 5,562,805</td>
<td>N = 20,465</td>
<td>N = 5,562,805</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada and other country</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>79.8</td>
<td>82.2</td>
<td>88.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Canadian citizen</td>
<td>N = 21,465</td>
<td>N = 17,562,805</td>
<td>N = 21,465</td>
<td>N = 17,562,805</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immigration Status</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Immigrant Population</td>
<td>45.3</td>
<td>55.5</td>
<td>45.6</td>
<td>76.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immigrant population</td>
<td>53.7</td>
<td>46.1</td>
<td>51.7</td>
<td>23.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-permanent residents</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generation Status</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frist generation</td>
<td>N = 20,465</td>
<td>N = 5,562,805</td>
<td>N = 25,495</td>
<td>N = 5,460,065</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second generation</td>
<td>43.6</td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td>41.7</td>
<td>17.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third generation</td>
<td>41.0</td>
<td>22.4</td>
<td>21.2</td>
<td>58.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Generation status</td>
<td>N = 20,465</td>
<td>N = 5,562,805</td>
<td>N = 35,495</td>
<td>N = 34,460,065</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frist generation</td>
<td>N = 52.2</td>
<td>49.0</td>
<td>56.2</td>
<td>23.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second generation</td>
<td>55.2</td>
<td>49.0</td>
<td>56.2</td>
<td>23.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Population</td>
<td>N = 22,395</td>
<td>N = 5,528,047</td>
<td>N = 35,885</td>
<td>N = 35,151,730</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth Population (male &amp; females)</td>
<td>17.7</td>
<td>13.1</td>
<td>15.6</td>
<td>12.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-24 years</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>14.2</td>
<td>15.4</td>
<td>13.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-34 years</td>
<td>32.0</td>
<td>27.3</td>
<td>31.2</td>
<td>29.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-54 years</td>
<td>38.9</td>
<td>35.4</td>
<td>39.3</td>
<td>36.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 4: Education, Employment and Income of Ghanaians in Toronto and Canada by 2016**


As with many Africans in Canada, there is little doubt that housing affordability, exclusionary tactics in the housing market, and the tendency to live among people of their own ethno-racial background are behind the spatial pattern of Ghanaians in the GTA with many of them living in the Metro Toronto Housing Authority social housing units and other low-standard apartments and row-houses in the GTA (Mensah and Williams 2017). At the same time, as the works of Firang (2011) and Mensah (2010) show, homeownership is growing steadily among Ghanaians in places such as Brampton, North York, and Mississauga.

**METHODOLOGICAL APPROACHES FOR ESTIMATING THE GHANAIAN DIASPORA**

In this section, we propose four main approaches for estimating the size and characteristics of the Ghanaian diaspora in the GTA. For ease of presentation, we have dubbed these four approaches as: (i) add-up; (ii) a complete census; (iii) a major survey; and (iv) the analysis of customized data. We profile these options in turn, together with what we see as their respective strengths and weaknesses.

**Approach #1: “Add-Up”**

This approach entails a very rough estimate of the size of the Ghanaian population in GTA by simply adding up the number of Ghanaians in the various Ghanaian immigrant organizations such as churches, mosques, home-town associations, and old students’ associations. In its “crudest” form, this approach will involve the mere adding up of the number of people from these organizations, without any idea of, or access to, the names and demographic characteristics of the people. The obvious drawback with this crude estimation is that of double (or multiple) counting, and the fact that not all Ghanaians are members of such organizations. In its “refined” form, this approach will involve the mere adding up of the number of people from these organizations, without any idea of, or access to, the names and demographic characteristics of the people. The obvious drawback with this crude estimation is that of double (or multiple) counting. That even this “refined” version will have its own problems is obvious: First, as with the crude approach, not all Ghanaians will be captured, since some do not belong to any Ghanaian organization. Secondly, it is likely that not all the organizations will have a comprehensive list of members, even assuming they are prepared to share their list with the estimator. Thirdly, even if all goes well and the estimator is able to get a good count of the number of Ghanaians from these listings, the question remains: then what? Do we really gain much by just knowing that there are 20,000...
Ghanaians in Toronto, without any idea about their basic socioeconomic and demographic profile? Certainly not! One can readily question the rationale for putting in this much effort to procure a dataset of such obvious limited utility for any evidence-based planning.

**Approach #2: A Complete Census**

With this census approach, the aim is to count all Ghanaians in the GTA by way of a simple registration form or a simple questionnaire, per person. Each registration form will have a code number to mask the identity of the registrant if need be. This registration form will have one- or two-page questionnaire, seeking basic immigration and demographic data on the registrant. The idea is to have all Ghanaians in the GTA register by filling out this form, either in person or through a face-to-face interview by a Research Assistant or a census taker. One can also have an Internet version of the registration form for those who are computer savvy and might want to register online do so. To the extent that this approach is a census (i.e., an attempt to count all Ghanaians, one-by-one), it is obviously very costly. In particular, one would need a lot of census takers or Research Assistants to register all Ghanaians and to help input and analyze the ensuing data with the help of statistical software such as SPSS. The cost involved in such a exercise would be quite prohibitive; no wonder no immigrant group has been able to conduct a census, as far as we know.

**Approach #3: A Major Survey**

The object of this approach is to conduct a large sample survey, involving a comprehensive questionnaire. Given the obvious lack of a sample-frame, a true randomized sample is virtually impossible to attain. One just have to deploy a non-probability sampling technique, such as cluster or stratified sampling or even snowballing, which, in combination with a reasonably large sample size can help attain some semblance of representativeness. The stratification could be done along the axes of neighbourhood or municipality of residence, gender, or religion, for instance. In particular, the size of the Ghanaian population in the various municipalities (e.g., Toronto, Etobicoke, Vaughan, North York, Markham, Mississauga, Brampton, Scarborough, etc.), per the Canadian census, could be used as a guide for the stratification. How large should the sample be to be reasonably representative of the Ghanaian population? There are many different ways of determining a sample size, all of which are based on some assumptions and factors, including the population base, the allowable sampling error or the level of precision required, and the degree of variability in the attributes being measured. Generally, the more diverse the population, the larger the sample size required to obtain a given level of precision or representativeness. The sampling error, which is often expressed in percentage points, is the range in which the value of the population is expected to be. For instance, if we choose to go with the commonly used precision range of ± 5%, then we can conclude that a given measure will either be underestimated by 5% or overestimated by 5%. For instance, if say 70% of the Ghanaians in a sample intend to retire in Ghana, then one can conclude that in reality anywhere between 65% and 75% of Ghanaians have such homeward retirement plans. There are many formulas and software (e.g., Sample Power 2 and G-Power) used to determine sample size. A simple formula derived from the work of Glenn Israel (2009) of the University of Florida relies on the population base and the assumed level of precision to determine the sample size as follows:

\[
n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}
\]

Where \( n \) = sample size; \( N \) = population size; and \( e \) = the level of precision (i.e., 0.05)

With a major survey, one will get to know a lot more about the Ghanaian population in the GTA, especially when this survey is combined with the available census data. Still, it will be virtually impossible to ascertain the precise number of Ghanaians in the GTA by this approach also, in the absence of a complete census; mind you, one can use the available census data in combination with this survey to do some extrapolation.

**Approach #4: “Analysis of Customized Data”**

Another approach worth considering is the “analysis of customized data” from reputable Canadian government sources such as the Canadian census data from Statistics Canada and the Landing Immigrants Data System (LIDS) from Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC). Mensah and Adjibolosoo (1999) used the LIDS for their profile of African immigrants in the Lower Mainland of British Columbia under the sponsorship of the BC Ministry Responsible for Multiculturalism and Immigration. As with all datasets, the LIDS has its merits and demerits. For instance, while it contains a number of relevant socio-economic and demographic variables, including age, marital status, educational background, immigration class, and official language ability, it is only a snapshot of immigrants at the time of landing. Therefore, the number of immigrants or Ghanaians captured by the LIDS for any particular year is less than the actual number of Ghanaians in the country as of that same year. Perhaps, the biggest drawback of the LIDS dataset is the fact that it does not break down the number of immigrants into the various neighbourhoods and municipalities, such as Etobicoke, Vaughan, Scarborough, and North York. And, as with most government databases, the LIDS data do not identify counts that are less than 5, for reasons of confidentiality. Another obvious source of customized data on Ghanaian immigrants is the national census data from Statistics Canada. While the census dataset is far more comprehensive in terms of the variables it covers, and purportedly captures all Ghanaians living in Canada/Toronto at the time of the count, many in the Ghanaian community believe that the census underestimated the size of the Ghanaian population. As we saw earlier on, the census has some basic problems when it comes to the estimation of Blacks and Africans—and by implication, Ghanaians—in Canada. Also, Statistics Canada, for one, charges fees for the tabulation of customized data, and if one decides to go by this route, one has to decide how much data is needed, at what level of geographic coverage and disaggregation, and at what cost. When it comes to the LIDS data, one has to talk to Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) and, depending on the number of years of data one wants and the level of disaggregation, CIC might even give the data out free of charge.

**CONCLUSION**

The four approaches profiled here have their (de)merits, as their respective cost, comprehensiveness, and accuracy vary. Thus, it up to the estimator to decide which one, or which combination, to deployed, based on the context. By far, the “complete census” is the most prohibitive in terms of cost, but it is perhaps the only way one can get an accurate count of the number of Ghanaians in the GTA. The approach of “add-up” is clearly the crudest and, perhaps, the cheapest; it is clearly wrought with problems when it comes to
comprehensiveness and accuracy. The “major survey” has the obvious appeal of giving us the most comprehensive data, and could, therefore, be used to gain deeper insights into how Ghanaians live their lives in Toronto, and how they connect with people and institutions in the homeland by way of remittance and other transnational activities. The “analysis of customized census” has the advantage of timeliness, as the dataset is already there to be acquired and analyzed. At the same time, any analysis of a customized data has to go by existing variables and their categorizations, all of which undermine the utility of the ensuing data, not to mention that it is incapable of providing us with the true size of Ghanaian diaspora in the GTA. In drawing this piece to a close, it bears stressing that should it becomes necessary for one to collect such data for political purposes, such as having the diaspora vote in accordance with the Ghana’s ROPAL initiative, then there is the additional need to tighten up on matters of research ethics, especially as they pertain to data comprehensiveness, security, management, analysis, and confidentiality to ward off charges of political bias.

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